Approved for Release: 2025/06/25 C06949055

(b)(3)

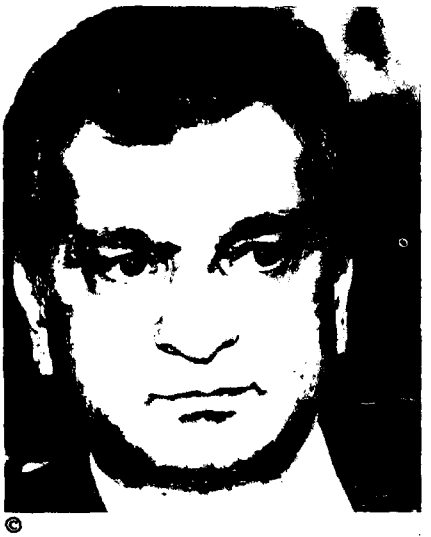
BF

BABRAK Karmal
(Phonetic: baBRAK)

AFGHANISTAN

President, Revolutionary Council
(since December 1979)

Addressed as:
Mr. President



©

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

Since the installation of longtime Communist Babrak Karmal as his country's leader following a bloody Soviet-engineered coup and invasion, he has only limited popularity among his countrymen. Babrak has tried to gain legitimacy and international recognition for his government, but his attempts to bolster his image and that of his government have continually failed. He has broadened the government's political base by including some military leaders and non-Communists in the Cabinet and the Revolutionary Council (the main executive and quasi-legislative body). His efforts so far have not satisfied the general populace, who oppose Soviet intervention; in the eyes of his own people, as well as of the world in general Since he took office there have been constant rumors that his removal is imminent.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

(b)(3)

Babrak has been general secretary of the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) since he assumed office. The PDPA is a bitterly divided party, and this split, which has led to violent clashes even among senior ministers, has become public knowledge. Babrak has chastised members of both factions publicly, hoping to eliminate the rivalry and political turmoil the split has caused.

(b)(3)

Communist Connection

In 1949 Babrak entered the Law Faculty at Kabul University, where he began his leftwing activities about a year later. Arrested for leftist agitation on campus, he was jailed during 1952-56. After his release, he received a law degree and served in the Army for a year. From 1958 until 1965 he was a minor official in the Planning Ministry. Babrak joined the PDPA when it was formed in 1965 and won a seat in parliament the same year. There he displayed his skills as an orator and political tactician. He was defeated in 1966 but regained his seat in 1969. Meanwhile, in 1967 the PDPA split over differences in party strategy. Babrak and his followers favored increased political agitation against the monarchy and formed the Parchami faction, while the more cautious members formed the Khalqi faction. In 1977 Babrak returned to the party fold and was named its vice chairman.

(b)(3)

Babrak's career in parliament had ended in 1973, when the legislature was dissolved. He then remained out of the public eye until 1978. When the Communists seized control in April of that year, he became a deputy prime minister and vice chairman of the Revolutionary Council and appeared to be the second most important figure in the regime. In late June and early July, however, he and other leaders of the Parchami faction were exiled. Babrak was sent to Czechoslovakia as Ambassador and, after being dismissed in

(cont.)

(b)(3)

Approved for Release: 2025/06/25 C06949055

Approved for Release: 2025/06/25 C06949055

(b)(3)

September, sought asylum in Eastern Europe, remaining until (b)(1) (b)(3) December 1979. In addition to the presidency, he held the prime-ministership until June 1981. (b)(3)

Personal Data

ambitious, intelligent, and affable, although he tends to dominate a conversation. His speeches have been known to last as long as six hours. Babrak speaks several Afghan dialects, English, and some German. He has traveled to most of the East European countries and to Mongolia on state visits. He often visits Moscow for consultations as well as for vacations (b)(1) (b)(3) Babrak, who is about 56, has several children. (b)(1) (b)(3)

(b)(1) (b)(3)

Babrak comes from a prominent Pashtun family (he may be related to the late President Mohammad Daoud). His father was an important general until the monarchy was overthrown in 1973 (b)(1) (b)(3)

(b)(3) Babrak has five brothers, one of whom is a high-ranking member of the PDPA.

19 February 1985

(b)(3)

Approved for Release: 2025/06/25 C06949055